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ABSTRACT

The Phi Delta Kappa model for community and professional involvement in goal decision-making was employed to encourage participation by established power groups and previously uninvolved citizens in the establishment of priorities for a board of education set of goals. Representatives of the various educational constituencies in the community indicated their perceived priorities of these goals, which closely resembled those suggested by Phi Delta Kappa. Nearly 2,000 educational consumers, including a 5 percent random sample of parents, participated in the effort through a series of meetings conducted by building principals. Data analysis began with efforts to condense the 18 goals into two distinct domains, cognitive and affective, and to examine for differences among the various groups and subgroups. The level of significance of difference vari d from goal to goal and from group to group. (Author)

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Process and Problems of Prioritizing Educational Goals in a Complex Society

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PROCESS AND PROBLEMS OF PRIORITIZING
EDUCATIONAL GOALS IN A COMPLEX SOCIETY

Introduction

Little disagreement is found among the many constituents of public education of the need for establishing educational goals and subsequently assigning priorities to these goals. Numerous authors (Saxe, 1975; Campbell, et al., 1975; House, 1973; Fantini, Gittell & Magat, 1970) have issued the call for, and developed logical thought to support the inclusion of representative community groups in the educational decision-making process. The opinion of the present writers is that professional public school personnel generally have not provided the opportunity for systematic input to those outside the established educational power groups. Unless parents and other sub-groups of our communities have organized themselves into lobbying agencies, and demanded their due right to participate in the goal setting and prioritizing process, they have largely been ignored.

The objective of the present effort was to systematically provide, via a sampling process, for input from all community members and groups into the assignment of priorities to a set of educational goals adopted with relatively little community input by a Board of Education. More specifically, this study deals with the relationship between characteristics of the participants in the study and the priority assignment of the goals. The two characteristics utilized in this report are the role group and the race of the participant.

Project Description

The locale for this effort was a midwestern city with a population of approximately 100,000, and a public school student population of 15,000-

20,000. Being the site of a major university, the population must be considered atypical, at least in terms of community educational achievements. The student population is made up of 17.5 percent ethnic minority group members, 13.9 percent of which are black. The next largest minority subgroup are Asian Americans who comprise 2 percent of the student population.

As indicated, the Board of Education had previously moved to adopt a set of educational goals with input only from the professional staff, and that on only a minimal basis (two committee meetings). These goals, once written and officially adopted, very closely resembled the educational goals as outlined in the Phi Delta Kappa model for community involvement in educational goal setting. Largely for this reason, the PDK model for prioritizing educational goals was selected as the vehicle to be utilized in this effort.

Following the guidelines of the PDK model, procedures were established to involve a significant number of the members of the educational community in the process. In accordance with these procedures, the goals adopted by the Board of Education were edited to fit the model.

It was decided that all professional staff should be offered the opportunity to participate in the goal prioritization process. Due to the large number of parents, the decision was made to utilize a random sample for this group. Five percent was selected as a sample of manageable, yet sufficient size. As part of their training, principals, who served as the primary data collectors, were instructed to identify, on their school lists, the name of every twentieth parent. The identified parent was contacted by telephone and asked to participate. Insofar as possible, the principals were asked to alternate the sex of the parent. The selection of the student sample was

less systematic. Group leaders for the student sample were the building representatives of the Student Advocate School Board. Since logistically it did not seem possible to gather a random sample of all secondary students, the group leaders were simply advised to contact teachers of classes of a general nature. That is, they were to avoid asking students in specialized classes, such as advanced math, to participate, but rather to concentrate on general English courses for example. The size of the student sample was to be equal to 5 percent of the number of secondary school students.

Utilizing the Phi Delta Kappa model, data were collected regarding the perceptions of the participants of the desirable priorities for the educational goals, as well as a rating of the present district programs which pertain to those goals. Along with these perceptions, basic demographic data were requested from all participants. Using these various data sets, it was possible to describe statistically the perceptions of the many subgroups within the major sample.

Data Analysis

In order to make the two sets of comparisons among the population means of the priority ratings, corresponding to the racial groups and to the role groups (the field effects), a one-way analysis of variance for unequal group sizes was used. This was followed by the Scheffé method of multiple comparisons. The Kendall coefficient of concordance of goal ranking between all role groups, and the Kendall rank correlation coefficient of goal rankings according to the racial subgroups, were used to assess the similarities among the rankings within each sub-group in the population studied.

Over 1700 persons were involved in the goal prioritizing exercise. Of these, approximately 1500 provided usable demographic data. This total included a five percent sample of parents, five percent of the secondary school students, virtually all administrators, approximately 60 percent of the teachers, and eight of nine board members. The number of persons in the major racial groups within each role is illustrated in the following table.

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF PERSONS IN EACH ROLE BY RACE

RACE	ROLE					
	Parents	Teachers	Students	Administrators	Board	Total
Black	60	64	35	7	0	166
White	460	563	245	47	8	1323
Total	520	627	380	54	8	1489

Mean weights are outlined in the following table. The maximum weight which could be assigned to any goal when the PDK model is used is five, while the minimum is zero. The mean weights for each role and group were determined by simply averaging the individual input data. Priorities were determined for each group by ranking these mean weights.

The following series of tables examine the data by goal and role group, utilizing the one-way analysis of variance model with the dependent variable being ratings on the goal. The independent variable was the role of the respondent. Significant comparisons were noted at the .05 level using

TABLE 2

GOAL MEAN WEIGHT DATA FOR THE TOTAL DISTRICT EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY BY THE ROLE OF THE RESPONDENT

			ROLE				
	GOAL		Parents	Teachers	Students	Admin-istrators	Board
1.	Language Arts	$\bar{X}$ wt.	4.60	4.49	3.52	4.39	4.87
2.	Changing Society	$\bar{X}$ wt.	2.24	2.29	2.60	2.30	2.00
3.	Job Selection/Skills	$\bar{X}$ wt.	2.59	2.58	2.93	2.74	2.87
4.	Math	$\bar{X}$ wt.	3.30	3.00	3.59	3.09	3.12
5.	Using Information	$\bar{X}$ wt.	3.02	2.48	2.17	2.45	3.63
6.	Science/Art/ Humanities	$\bar{X}$ wt.	2.89	2.65	2.50	2.61	2.63
7.	Physical/ Mental Health	$\bar{X}$ wt.	2.46	2.47	2.75	2.37	2.00
8.	Pride-work/ Self-worth	$\bar{X}$ wt.	3.60	3.91	2.95	3.58	2.00
9.	Respect People	$\bar{X}$ wt.	2.37	3.04	2.85	3.25	2.25
10.	Family Living	$\bar{X}$ wt.	1.46	1.49	2.01	1.46	1.38
11.	Natural Resources	$\bar{X}$ wt.	1.52	1.57	2.51	1.51	1.50
12.	Economic Resources	$\bar{X}$ wt.	1.50	1.49	2.70	1.54	2.00
13.	Desire for Learning	$\bar{X}$ wt.	3.67	3.20	2.83	3.14	3.25
14.	Equality of Opportunity	$\bar{X}$ wt.	2.14	2.48	2.54	2.95	2.75
15.	Non-English speaking	$\bar{X}$ wt.	1.03	1.23	2.08	1.23	1.13
16.	Parent Participation	$\bar{X}$ wt.	1.83	1.60	1.81	1.93	1.50
17.	Social Responsibility	$\bar{X}$ wt.	2.63	2.89	2.50	3.02	3.00

Scheffé's test and are cited in the discussion for each table. While significant differences were noted on each goal between various groups, only those data deemed to be of special interest were utilized for the purposes of this paper.

Significant comparisons were noted in Table 3 as follows: parents/students, teachers/students, administrators/students, and Board/students. Students apparently feel that language arts is less important as an educational goal than do the other reference groups.

TABLE 3

ROLE GROUP RATINGS ON THE LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

Group	Size	Mean	Std. Dev.
Parent	580	4.60	.77
Teacher	717	4.49	.93
Student	350	3.52	1.29
Administrator	57	4.39	.98
Board	8	4.87	.35

Source	Sum of Sq.	df	Mean Sq.	F	Prob.
Between	291.6	4	72.9	77.7	.000
Within	1602.5	1707	.94		
Total	1894.1	1711			

Significant comparisons were noted in Table 4 as follows: parents/teachers, parents/students, and teachers/students. Students differed with their parents and teachers by assigning a higher weight to the math goal. Parents also did not agree with teachers who rated the goal significantly lower.

TABLE 4

ROLE GROUP RATINGS ON THE MATH GOAL

Group	Size	Mean	Std. Dev.
Parent	576	3.30	1.35
Teacher	715	3.00	1.49
Student	347	3.59	1.36
Administrator	57	3.09	1.44
Board	8	3.12	1.13

Source	Sum of Sq.	df	Mean Sq.	F	Prob.
Between	108.6	4	27.2	13.55	.000
Within	3407.3	1700	2.0		
Total	3516.0	.724			

The following significant comparisons were noted in Table 5: parents/teachers, parents/students, parents/Board, teachers/students, teachers/Board, students/administrators, administrators/Board. It should be noted that students and board members were in agreement on this goal as both groups rated it lower than did parents, teachers, and administrators.

TABLE 5

ROLE GROUP RATINGS ON THE PRIDE IN WORK/SELF-WORTH GOAL

Group	Size	Mean	Std. Dev.
Parent	580	3.60	1.27
Teacher	717	3.91	1.17
Student	349	2.95	1.32
Administrator	57	3.58	1.24
Board	8	2.00	1.69

Source	Sum of Sq.	df	Mean Sq.	F	Prob.
Between	234.5	4	58.7	37.77	.000
Within	2648.0	1706	1.6		
Total	2882.5	1710			

In Table 6 the following significant comparisons were noted: parents/teachers, parents/students, and parents/administrators. It appears that the parents and Board were in agreement as they rated this goal lower than did the other groups.

TABLE 6

ROLE GROUP RATINGS ON THE
DEVELOPING RESPECT FOR PEOPLE GOAL

Group	Size	Mean	Std. Dev.
Parent	574	2.37	1.22
Teacher	715	3.04	1.27
Student	349	2.85	1.30
Administration	57	3.25	1.12
Board	8	2.25	.89

Source	Sum of Sq.	df	Mean Sq.	F	Prob.
Between	160.4	4	40.1	25.41	.000
Within	2679.4	1698	1.6		
Total	2839.8	1702			

In Table 7, comparisons of parents/teachers, parents/students, and parents/administrators were noted as being significantly different. Parents assigned this goal a lower weight than did other role groups. However, subsequent tables will reveal a significant difference within the parent group.

TABLE 7

ROLE GROUP RATINGS ON THE
EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY GOAL

Group	Size	Mean	Std. Dev.
Parent	574	2.14	1.27
Teacher	707	2.48	1.31
Student	339	2.54	1.24
Administrator	57	2.95	1.37
Board	8	2.75	1.28

Source	Sum of Sq.	df	Mean Sq.	F	Prob.
Between	67.7	4	16.9	10.24	.000
Within	2774.5	1680	1.7		
Total	2842.1	1684			

Significant comparisons were noted in Table 8 as follows: parents/teachers, parents/students, teachers/students, and administrators/students. Students rated this goal higher than did the other referent groups with parents being significantly lower than teachers. The curious aspect surrounding these data lies with the fact that all groups tended to assign this goal a relatively low weight. Yet, the State Department of Education has mandated that all local districts provide specialized programs for students for whom English is a secondary language. Faced with this mandate and lacking financial assistance, educational leaders are required to allocate local monies irregardless of local priorities.

TABLE 8

ROLE GROUP RATINGS ON THE
NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING GOAL

Group	Size	Mean	Std. Dev.
Parent	559	1.03	.76
Teacher	696	1.23	.87
Student	339	2.08	1.09
Administrator	57	1.23	.71
Board	8	1.13	.64

Source	Sum of Sq.	df	Mean Sq.	F	Prob.
Between	250.8	4	62.7	80.73	.000
Within	1284.8	1654	.8		
Total	1535.7	1658			

Within role groups, considerations of racial characteristics produced varying goal priorities. This was especially true for all groups, but especially so for parents. The following series of tables illustrate these data by goal, role group, and racial characteristic. The one-way analysis of variance model was utilized with the dependent variable being the weight assigned to the goal. The independent variable was the respondent's racial characteristic. Again, not all available data were utilized for the purposes of this paper.

Although both groups assigned a high weight to the language arts goal, white parents rated the language arts goal significantly higher than black parents as indicated by the data in Table 9.

TABLE 9

PARENT RATINGS BY RACIAL CHARACTERISTIC
ON THE LANGUAGE ARTS GOAL

	Black	White	df	t	p
N:	59	460			
M:	4.41	4.65	518	2.40	.02
SD:	.98	.69			

Again, as indicated in Table 10, both sets of parents assigned a relatively high weight to the math goal. White parents rated the goal significantly higher than did black parents.

TABLE 10

PARENT RATINGS BY RACIAL CHARACTERISTIC
ON THE MATH GOAL

	Black	White	df	t	p
N:	58	459			
M:	2.91	3.41	516	2.67	.01
SD:	1.27	1.33			

The difference between the ratings assigned by black and white parents on the goal of developing respect for people was significant. Black parents saw a greater need for the district to assign resources to the development of these skills than did white parents according to Table 11.

TABLE 11

PARENT RATINGS BY RACIAL CHARACTERISTIC
ON THE RESPECT FOR PEOPLE GOAL

	Black	White	df	t	p
N:	58	466			
M:	2.81	2.31	513	2.99	.000
SD:	1.39	1.18			

Differences of obvious significance were apparent on the equality of opportunity goal. Black parents felt that the goal should be assigned a relatively high weight within the district. White parents disagreed in Table 12.

TABLE 12

PARENT RATINGS BY RACIAL CHARACTERISTIC
ON THE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY GOAL

	Black	White	df	t	p
N:	59	454			
M:	3.05	1.98	512	6.48	.000
SD:	1.42	1.56			

Both racial groups of parents assigned a surprisingly low weight to this goal of parent participation. Prior to the investigation, the authors and other school officials had hypothesized that parents would view the goal as highly important. This result did not materialize. Yet, significant differences were found between black and white parents. Black parents feel that parental involvement in the schools should be assigned a greater weight than do white parents as reported in Table 13.

TABLE 13

PARENT RATINGS BY RACIAL CHARACTERISTIC
ON THE PARENT PARTICIPATION GOAL

	Black	White	df	t	p
N:	59	450			
M:	2.30	1.74	508	3.48	.000
SD:	1.29	1.15			

In order to examine the rank orderings assigned to the goals by the various role groups, the Kendall coefficient of concordance (Siegel, 1956; pp. 229-238) was found among the ranks of the goals for each of the role groups. The following table illustrates these data.

TABLE 14

RANK ORDER PRIORITIES ASSIGNED TO EDUCATIONAL GOALS ACCORDING TO ROLE GROUPS

GOAL		ROLE				
		Parents	Teachers	Students	Administrators	Board
1	-	1	1	2	1	1
2	-	11	12	9	12	11.5
3	-	8	8	4	8	6
4	-	4	5	1	5	4
5	-	5	9.5	14	10	2
6	-	6	7	12.5	9	8
7	-	9	11	7	11	11.5
8	-	3	2	3	2	11.5
9	-	10	4	5	3	9
10	-	16	14.5	16	16	16
11	-	14	16	11	15	14.5
12	-	15	14.5	8	14	11.5
13	-	2	3	6	4	3
14	-	12	9.5	10	7	7
15	-	17	17	15	17	17
16	-	13	13	17	13	14.5
17	-	7	6	12.5	6	5

The Kendall coefficient of concordance was found to be W = .85 among the ranks of the goals for each of the role groups for the total population. The size of the W value is large enough to reject the null hypothesis of no relationship among the ranks at the .01 level. There is definitely a direct relationship among the ranks of the goals for each of the role groups. Groups tended to rank order the goals in the same way.

Educational Significance

Community involvement in educational decision-making is no longer a concept to be simply discussed in university courses concerned with educational leadership. It is a reality of our democratic society that the constituents of public services must be involved in a meaningful manner in the basic directional decisions of the institutions designed to provide those services. Nowhere is this more true than in the realm of public education. All segments of the community must be involved in goal setting.

Previous efforts, known to these writers, have attempted to meet this need. Generally, however, these efforts have lacked systematic community involvement. Probably the most common approach to a solution of the problem has been for school administrators to mail questionnaires requesting input to student homes, and then to draw conclusions from the instruments which are returned. Others have utilized the mass media to solicit volunteers for a goal-setting meeting. Both lack the systematic sampling process utilized for the parent sample of the present study, and both lack the very positive benefits which a school district can reap by a personal telephone call from a building principal to a parent asking for assistance. Principals have reported highly favorable feedback, especially from those parents who were selected for the sample, but who had not previously been highly active in school-oriented organizations.

Use of the PDK model in this personalized manner has demonstrated that it is possible to carry out group decision-making processes in such a way that participants retain positive feelings about the experience. While no causal relationship is claimed, it should be noted that shortly after this effort was carried out, the electorate of the community voted to increase

property taxes directed toward school purposes by a significant amount. This action took place at a time during which virtually all other like governmental units in the area were experiencing rejection of such proposals.

Analysis of the data revealed high relationships among the groups according to the order of the priorities which were assigned to the goals. Still, startling differences were noted between the groups on some goals. The most eye-catching of these was on the goal "pride in work and self-worth." With one exception, all groups placed this goal in the second or third position. The Board of Education, however, felt "pride" was an 11-12th level priority. Similarly, all groups except one felt that the development of math skills should be a fourth or fifth priority. Students assigned math skills to their first priority. While the position in which students placed the math goals created a certain pride in the community, their ranking of the goal of "social responsibility" proved to be disconcerting. All groups, save students, were in near agreement that the development of citizenship and a sense of social responsibility should be given no less than the seventh position in the rank ordering. Students disagreed and placed this goal in the 12-13th position. An apparent split in the groups occurred on the goal of developing respect for other peoples. Board members and parents were in agreement that this goal was a relatively low level priority. Teachers, students, and administrators disagreed and placed the goal in no lower than the fifth position. While the Kendall coefficient of concordance was high and sufficient to reject the null hypothesis, important differences still exist which point out the difficulties facing educational leaders as they attempt to develop consensus among their

constituents regarding priorities. A review of these differences in priorities, and of the data examining the mean weights assigned to the goals by the various groups in terms of significant differences between groups, as well as of the magnitude of standard deviations within groups, lends credence to the position that communities must move in the direction of more and varied alternative programs. In a complex urban society, it may indeed no longer be possible to meet the needs and priorities of all groups and subgroups with a simplistic model of organization. It would appear that a sufficient degree of disagreement exists among the complex interactions of almost countless subgroups and special interest groups to urge leaders to provide various alternative routes through the schooling process.

Appendix A

Educational Goals

1. DEVELOP SKILLS IN READING, WRITING, SPEAKING, AND LISTENING

   A. Develop the ability to comprehend ideas through reading and listening to the fullest extent possible for each student.
   B. Develop the ability to communicate ideas through writing and speaking to the fullest extent possible for each student.

2. PREPARE TO TRY TO UNDERSTAND THE CHANGES THAT TAKE PLACE IN OUR WORLD AND SOCIETY

   A. Develop ability to adjust to the changing demands of society.
   B. Develop an awareness and the ability to adjust to a changing world and its problems.
   C. Develop understanding of the past, identify with the present, and the ability to meet the future.

3. GAIN INFORMATION NEEDED TO MAKE JOB SELECTIONS AND DEVELOP SKILLS NEEDED TO ENTER THE WORLD OF WORK

   A. Promote self-understanding and self-direction in relation to students' occupational interests.
   B. Develop the ability to use information and counseling services related to the selection of a job.
   C. Develop knowledge of specific information about various vocations, the needs of our society, and an awareness of adult values which lead to vocational choice.
   D. Develop marketable skills and abilities needed for immediate employment.

4. DEVELOP SKILLS IN MATHEMATICAL COMPUTATIONS AND CONCEPTS

   A. Develop the ability to comprehend mathematical concepts to the fullest extent possible for each student.
   B. Develop the ability to compute mathematical operations to the fullest extent possible for each student.
   C. Develop the ability to the fullest extent possible for each student to apply rational and intellectual processes to the identification and solution of problems.

5. FOSTER THE EXAMINATION AND USE OF INFORMATION

   A. Develop the ability to examine constructively and creatively.
   B. Develop the ability to use scientific methods.
   C. Develop the skills to think and proceed logically.

6. LEARN TO APPRECIATE THE SCIENCES, ARTS, AND HUMANITIES

   A. Develop abilities for expression of ideas through various media of the fine arts.
   B. Cultivate appreciation for the cultural beauty of the arts.
   C. Develop talents in music, art, literature, and foreign languages.
   D. Develop talents in the natural and social sciences.

7. PRACTICE AND UNDERSTAND THE IDEAS OF BOTH PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

   A. Establish an effective physical fitness program which includes the development of lifelong recreational skills.
   B. Develop an understanding of good physical health and well-being.
   C. Develop an understanding of good mental health and well-being.
   D. Develop a concern for public health and safety.

8. DEVELOP PRIDE IN WORK AND A FEELING OF SELF-WORTH

   A. Develop a feeling of student pride in his achievements and progress.
   B. Develop self-understanding and self-awareness.
   C. Develop the student's feeling of positive self-worth, security, and self-assurance.

9. LEARN TO RESPECT AND GET ALONG WITH PEOPLE WHO MAY THINK, DRESS, AND ACT DIFFERENTLY AS CITIZENSHIP SKILLS ARE DEVELOPED

   A. Develop an appreciation for an understanding of other people, their values, and cultures.
   B. Develop loyalty to American heritage and democratic ideals.
   C. Develop a cooperative attitude toward living and working with others and recognition of the need for group interdependence.
   D. Develop a moral and ethical sense of values, goals, and lawful processes in our free society.

10. UNDERSTAND AND PRACTICE THE SKILLS OF FAMILY LIVING

   A. Develop understanding and appreciation of the principles of living in the family group.
   B. Develop attitudes leading to acceptance of responsibilities as family members.
   C. Develop an awareness of future family responsibilities and achievement of skills in preparing to accept them.

11. LEARN HOW TO BE A GOOD MANAGER OF PROPERTY AND RESOURCES

   A. Develop skills in management of natural and human resources and man's environment.

12. LEARN HOW TO BE A GOOD MANAGER OF MONEY AND RESOURCES

   A. Develop an understanding of economic principles and responsibilities.
   B. Develop ability and understanding in personal buying, selling, and investment.

13. DEVELOP A DESIRE FOR LEARNING, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

   A. Develop intellectual curiosity and eagerness for lifelong learning.
   B. Develop a positive attitude toward continuing independent education.
   C. Develop ability to use leisure time productively.

14. DEVELOP EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AT ALL LEVELS WHICH WILL PROVIDE FOR EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

    A. Provide educational programs to combat sexual, racial, religious, ethnic and social class discrimination.
    B. Provide educational programs which provide balanced opportunity for all groups within the school structure.

15. DEVELOP EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS WHICH MEET THE NEEDS OF THE NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING PERSON

    A. Provide opportunity for students whose native tongue is other than English to develop their skills in their native language while developing proficiency in English.

16. DEVELOP PARENTAL AND TOTAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

    A. Provide effective means for involving parents in the educational progress of their children.
    B. Provide for increased community involvement in the development of educational programs which will lead to the sharing of mutual resources.

17. DEVELOP CITIZENSHIP AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

    A. With other community institutions, develop mature and responsible citizens with a sense of social awareness and moral and ethical values.
    B. Encourage critical but constructive thinking and responsible involvement while considering the rights of all in the resolution of the problems of our society.
    C. Create within the school system an atmosphere of social justice, and responsibility, and equality.

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